

Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to possible further legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT IS TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of government is to protect the people. It is a very simple but yet fundamental principle of the United States Constitution.

Our Federal Government has to protect us from enemies from abroad, and our government does a good job of doing that. Our government also has the secondary responsibility to protect citizens in our country, and our government does a fairly good job of that.

But there is a unique problem where our government seems to be lacking, and that's protecting citizens that are working overseas for American contractors against other American citizens who commit crimes against them.

Today, Mr. Speaker, in the Judiciary Committee, a brave young lady came and testified about what happened to her, an individual by the name of Jamie Leigh Jones from my congressional district down in Texas.

As a young 20-year-old she went to work for KBR Construction Company overseas in Iraq. She was there just a few days when she was sexually assaulted by several individuals. After she was assaulted, Army doctors intervened and treated her initially for her medical injuries, which were devastating. The medical doctors took and prepared a rape kit, as is supposed to be done in cases like a criminal investigation, and for some reason, they never turned that rape kit over to the Federal Government, to the Justice Department, to the FBI. They turned it over to the company, and it has subsequently been damaged and destroyed.

After Jamie Leigh Jones was sexually assaulted, she was imprisoned as a hostage in a trailer, as she says, where she was not allowed to leave, was not allowed to eat or drink water. She frantically was able to find a cell phone that one of her guards let her borrow. She called her father in Texas, and he called me. And within 48 hours the State Department had dispatched two agents from Baghdad Embassy, found Jamie Leigh Jones, rescued her, and brought her back to the United States.

We would hope, then, that our government would continue this investigation to find the rapist who committed this crime against Jamie Leigh Jones.

This occurred in the year of 2005, and for these 2 years we have heard blissful silence from the United States Justice Department on what they are doing, if anything, to find these criminals who committed this crime.

After Jamie Leigh Jones has now come public with this, my office has received numerous phone calls from other workers who were contract workers, civilians, all females who were assaulted while working in Iraq who are now coming forward to tell their stories. And in their case, like Jamie Leigh Jones, nobody has been prosecuted and held accountable for the crimes committed against these women, these American citizens, these American patriots who are working overseas with our military, but yet crimes are being committed against them. And there is silence from the Justice Department about what is being done, if anything.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that Iraq and what has taken place against civilian workers is reminiscent of the days of the Old West, the Wild West, where crime was committed and no one was held accountable for their conduct.

There are hundreds of Department of Justice officials in Baghdad doing all kinds of things. Why aren't they investigating crimes against civilian workers that are being committed by other Americans? We don't know the answer. It's important that our government fulfill its first duty to its people, which is to protect them, and when crimes are committed against American civilians by other Americans in foreign lands, where we have jurisdiction in the green zone of Baghdad, that our government be relentless in bringing those people, those criminals, to the bar of justice and put them in jail rather than remain silent and not responding at all to these crimes.

So I would hope, Mr. Speaker, as this year ends and the next year begins that our Federal Government, our Justice Department, has a renewed interest in the Americans that are overseas. More Americans are serving in Iraq that are civilians than are serving in the military. And we know that crimes are being committed against them. It's important that those criminals be brought to the bar of justice and held accountable in a public trial because, Mr. Speaker, justice is what we do in America.

And that's just the way it is.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CARDOZA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HOUSE SHOULD VOTE ON TREATMENT PARITY BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, with 54 million Americans suffering the ravages of mental illness and 26 million suffering from chemical addiction, the failure of this Congress to pass the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act is a slap in the face to millions of Americans with mental illness and/or drug and alcohol addiction. It's also the biggest failure of this session of Congress.

Congress' failure to knock down the discriminatory barriers to treatment is a matter of life or death for people suffering from mental health and addiction diseases, diseases that took the lives of over 200,000 Americans last year alone.

Just 2 weeks ago, my friend of over 25 years took his own life as a result of depression. He joined 34,000 other Americans who have committed suicide from depression this year.

In my home State of Minnesota, Anna Westin was a young woman with anorexia. She suffered for several years from this terrible disease. Her parents' insurance company refused to cover the inpatient treatment that she desperately needed. Distraught at her condition and being a financial burden on her parents, young Anna took her own life.

Representative PATRICK KENNEDY and I held 14 field hearings across our country this year on the need to end insurance discrimination against mental illness and addiction. We heard story after story after story like these.

We heard from Steve Winter, who traveled in his wheelchair to several of our field hearings. When Steve was a young teenager, he awoke one morning with a stinging pain in his back. He stumbled downstairs to breakfast. He realized that blood was streaming down his back. He heard his mother's voice say, "Your sister is in heaven, and now you and I are going there to join her." His mother was pointing a gun at him. She had been taken off the schizophrenia drugs she desperately needed. As Steve put it, "My mother didn't shoot my sister and me; her mental illness did."

Clearly there are not many families in America, Mr. Speaker, who haven't been touched in some way by mental illness or addiction. Like my close personal friend, like Anna Westin and Steve Winter's sister, I could have been one of the thousands of Americans who die each year from mental illness and chemical addiction.

For on July 31, 1981, I awoke in a jail cell in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as